

Rounding The Year With The Motor Cars

Kaleidoscopically the finish of the year for the motor folks has come.

A topsy-turvy, wrong-end-to sort of a season they have had, with a surfeit of worries and cares, relieved these last few months by a semi-occasional cluster of sales and a bright five months' business to look back upon, which began with the opening season early in the spring and continued until bank balances of prospective owners commenced seeking an impregnable position and defied all efforts to dislodge them. The sales record since last January for the state is five hundred and twenty-two cars. Exclusive of the few machines placed by the dealers and agents who are scattered through the various counties north and south, the very great majority, if indeed not all, of the five hundred and twenty-two sold during the year can be credited to the sales organizations maintained by motor car agencies and companies in Salt Lake. There are in all one thousand three hundred and thirty-eight cars in Utah, and a more convincing argument that this state is as virgin a territory for the sale of automobiles as exists today anywhere in the country, could not be found than these undisputable figures. Thirteen hundred cars in Utah, represents a motor car ownership percentage of citizens well able financially to own and maintain cars, so small as to form what would seem to be an irresistible inducement for the aggressive promulgation of the automobile business in this state in the immediate future.

The changes in the construction of the standard makes of motor cars this year have exceeded by a very wide margin the changes made in standard types during 1909. The variations from the manufacturing and selling end of the business have come through a rather severe test in a man-

ner that has strengthened the industry immeasurably, for the survival of the fittest has been pretty nearly the rule. Insufficiently capitalized concerns and those unwisely directed and managed have suffered elimination, and this is perfectly true here. Despite the fact that the sale records of local dealers are not what those connected with the trade would have liked it to be, the past few months, the business is on a better, sounder and more conservative basis locally than ever before; higher grades of cars are being handled, prices are fairer and there are fewer opportunities for forfeited sales than has been the case at the close of business of any other year since the first car was sold in town. A multiplicity of causes is responsible. Stricter lines have been drawn on the ruinous system of extending unlimited credit, for a time very much in vogue here; better value has been put into the cheap and medium and high priced cars, and prospective owners know car values better than they did a year ago. Even though a certain amount of glamour still attaches to being a motorist and owning an automobile, a car is a familiar object, and the advent on the market of so large a number of medium priced machines, and the educational turn the publicity work of the manufacturers has taken, has combined to familiarize the average man, possessed of sufficient means to gratify his desire for a car, with the essentials of reliability.

The show season is opening from one end of the country to the other, and they hold more concernment for the makers of cars than ever before. Manufacturers are frank in saying that the crowds this year will be too well educated to take note only of the color a car is painted and with what leather it is upholstered; that they will want to

inspect the internals and they will know what they are looking at and what to ask for.

In Salt Lake the cheap and medium priced cars have had their inning most effectively the past ten months. Not that they have encroached at all on the sale of the higher priced machines, for the latter have held their own with those purchasers able to afford them as their initial cars, and with those owners who have discarded the cheap makes and for their second and third machines purchased the more expensive ones. For the ensuing year the outlook indicates a very fair division of trade between these two classes, with the less expensive cars the favorite. The tendency in manufacturing circles is apparently for concentration on medium priced machines. A most interesting development with the makers is the proposed invasion of England with American made medium-priced automobiles. Benjamin Briscoe, president of the United States Motors company is back of the main move along this line, and upon his return recently from Britain he sketched out the lines along which the United International Motors Limited company will operate. This concern is the selling organization for the American company which Mr. Briscoe heads that is to make the cars in England. His plans are interesting, as showing the trend of manufacturing ideas. Mr. Briscoe learned that the British do not like certain things about American cars because they do not conform to British ideas, and he learned, too, that it was a waste of time to attempt to swing the British public around to any other way of thinking than the one they enjoy at present. For that reason the English cars will be American in a sense, with such alterations as conform to the taste

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36-42 State St., Salt Lake

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CHALMERS-DETROIT